

First Quarter Check-In

CAO Land Use

VCC, HDLC, EMD, CPC, CEHB, SP

City of New Orleans

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I. 1040 Esplanade Avenue (Habana Café)

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Status Quo

- This mission-style service station, circa 1925, at the corner of Esplanade Ave. and N. Rampart is a good example of the early gasoline filling stations built in the French Quarter. The building and the adjacent, two-story Victorian commercial and residential building have been vacant and in a state of blight for a long period of time. This being such a prominent corner and important approach to the Quarter, a redevelopment proposal should be seen as a positive.



I. 1040 Esplanade Avenue (Habana Café)

Scope

- **08/26/14:** The proposed concept includes the interior renovation of 1036-38 Esplanade and the renovation of 1040 Esplanade/1324 N. Rampart; the latter is primarily a canopy structure formerly used as a gas station and two (2) small enclosed structures for use as a casual restaurant known as Habana Cafe. The structures are zoned as VCC-2, which permits the proposed standard restaurant use. Staff would like to affirm that the VCC is not the review entity that approves and permits proposed changes in use; as Article 8, Section 8.1 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance explains, the VCC is responsible for reviewing the proposed, physical changes to the building that are necessary in order for the building to function as the proposed, new use. As submitted, staff finds the concept and changes appropriate, because the proposed changes affect only existing built spaces with no demolition, additions, or new structures included.
- The Victorian structure at 1036-38 Esplanade has very few proposed changes. The building as a whole, as well as its historic detailing, will remain intact and unchanged; the installation of rooftop mechanical vents and connections/openings to 1040 Esplanade through the N. Rampart elevation constitute the only significant changes.
- Due to the prominence of this location, and to the fact that the applicant has other such restaurants in other large cities which are seen to potentially draw large and disruptive crowds, there was a degree of negative public feedback to the proposal. The project was reviewed and modified multiple times before being conceptually approved by the VCC.
- **01/07/2015:** The VCC voted to approve the proposal as revised and presented. At this point a lawsuit was filed against the VCC followed by an appeal to the Fourth Circuit.
- **12/13/2017:** The Fourth Circuit did not find any error in the trial court's finding that the city's decisions when approving the request for a resubdivision and remodel were not considered to be arbitrary or capricious. Accordingly, the trial court's judgement denying the relief requested was affirmed. As such, VCC notified the architect and developer that they should proceed with final construction documents for review and permitting. While these documents were being prepared, VCC issued permits for the renovation of the historic buildings which have now been completed.



I. 1040 Esplanade Avenue (Habana Café)

Improvement/Why It Matters

- As the VCC and the Building Department await final construction documents, this prominent corner, long an eyesore to the community, has been beautifully restored to its original appearance. The service station structure has received a complete new exterior resurfacing while reusing the existing terra cotta barrel tiles on the roof overhang. Despite neighborhood opposition, locals and visitors no longer see the unfortunate blight at this entrance to the Quarter, across from the newly completed Rampart Street streetcar stop, that has plagued the neighborhood for decades.



II. 908 Esplanade Avenue

II. 908 Esplanade Avenue

Status Quo

- This is a handsome 3 ½-story, brick townhouse, broken up over time into numerous apartments, which has a plastered entrance and wrought-iron balconies with a three-story service wing and a large courtyard with a swimming pool. The property has been cited by the VCC numerous times for serious demolition by neglect conditions since at least 2014. Elements of the building had been removed or modified over time without permits. Several permits have been issued to address the violations, but there has been little evidence of work having been performed. Blight conditions forced the closure of the building to residential use. Ultimately the building department removed electrical and gas service to the building. The VCC and building department inspected the property again in May of 2018 and found evidence that the building was being utilized by vagrants and was a dangerous haven for illicit activity. Rear balconies were in imminent danger of collapse and represented a serious hazard. A permit was issued for their removal and for all openings in the building to be sealed completely to eliminate the opportunity for intrusion. This work was undertaken immediately.



II. 908 Esplanade Avenue

Scope

- Responsibility for the property has been turned over to the son of the elderly property owner. He has been in close contact with VCC staff, hiring building professionals to draft plans for the full restoration of the large building and grounds. Permits have been issued and work is underway for the reconstruction. All matters of violation are being handled which include, but are not limited to the following:
- Repair of building foundation.
- Repair and replacement of missing and deteriorated brick masonry and repointing of all mortar joints.
- Repair and replacement of missing and broken windows and doors.
- Stucco repair.
- Replacement of all wooden elements.
- Removal and relocation of large amounts of exposed conduit.
- Installation of Spanish roof tiles, standing seam roofing.
- Gutter replacement.
- Removal of large amounts of graffiti.
- Installation of appropriate exterior lighting.
- Removal of vegetation growing on the building.
- Complete painting of the entire building and surrounding masonry walls.



II. 908 Esplanade Avenue

Improvement/Why It Matters

- Although this work is only recently underway, the building has been secured and vigorous restoration work is on-going; this building is no longer open and available to vagrancy and illicit behavior which had been quite dangerous and problematic. The repairs are ensuring that this building does not continue to decay or exist in a state of blight which had long plagued this beautiful stretch of Esplanade Avenue. Once the renovations have been completed, several quality apartments or condominiums will be available for residential occupation.



III. Rooftop Addition Guidelines

Revision

III. Rooftop Addition Guidelines Revision

Status Quo

- A subcommittee of French Quarter residents, business owners, architects, neighborhood organizers, VCC staff and commissioners was formed to define and draft guidelines for the regulation of activated, open-air rooftop conditions within the Vieux Carré, something that, heretofore, has not been addressed by the VCC Design Guidelines. There is a recent trend towards commercial activation of rooftops within the Vieux Carré. This affects both proposed new construction, as well as proposals to modify historic buildings with terraces and penthouses in order to capture access to the currently prized “rooftop experience”.
- Although the current VCC design guidelines effectively define rooftop *additions* to existing buildings, they are inadequate with regards to unconditioned, activated rooftops or terraces. It is our goal that guidelines be as prescriptive as possible so that all proposed new construction, modifications or rooftop additions are appropriate to the *tout ensemble* while ensuring that applicants, once again, find the VCC review process to be transparent and predictable.
- Although the appeal of such activated rooftop space is understandable, this is a dramatic departure from the usage of the historic roofscape of the French Quarter. There is little to no historical precedent within the Vieux Carré for the commercial roof terraces being proposed today for use as auxiliary recreational spaces on top of large-scale, adaptive reuse conversions of warehouses and other types of commercial buildings, as well as on proposed new construction. The ad hoc use of existing roofs as occupied space is also not appropriate and should expressly not be permitted.
- Review should include not only the proposed physical rooftop construction, but also how its presence would affect the *tout ensemble* (CCNO 166-151) of the District (i.e. potential view-sheds that are blocked or radically altered). It is important to remember the charge of the VCC as expressed in the Louisiana State Constitution where the commission was authorized to preserve the buildings of the Vieux Carré,
- *“...for the benefit of the people of the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana.”* This was declared to have a “public purpose” and continued that the *“quaint and distinctive character of the Vieux Carré section of the City...may not be injuriously affected, and in order that the value to the community of those buildings having architectural and historical worth may not be impaired, and in order that a reasonable degree of control may be exercised over the architecture of private and semi-public buildings erected on or abutting the public streets of said Vieux Carré section”*.
- The VCC Design Guidelines, ratified by New Orleans City Council on August 6, 2015, state:
- *“In its regulation of the Vieux Carré, the VCC’s jurisdiction is limited to proposed exterior changes to a property including the rooftop, interior of a courtyard, alleyway and/or carriageway. However, to preserve the tout ensemble, the Commission has the responsibility to comment on, or raise concern regarding, any issue not specifically under its regulatory authority that has the potential to jeopardize the built environment.” (VCCDG 01-03)*
- This jurisdiction includes elements that are not visible from the public right-of-way such as rooftops (both existing and proposed new construction).



III. Rooftop Addition Guidelines Revision

Scope

- Currently, the design guidelines define a *roof top addition* as any new construction on top of an existing rooftop for occupied or unoccupied space, and includes a full-floor addition. This definition should be revised to include, *“occupied, finished space designed to accommodate outdoor commercial or residential living space including, but not limited to, furniture, landscaping, lighting, etc., all of which must be reviewed and approved by VCC.”*
- *Roof deck* should be defined as, generally, a platform built above the roof structure, capable of supporting weight, similar to a floor and connected to the main building by stairs and possibly an elevator. It is typically enclosed by a railing or parapet for safety.
- Based on research of how other similar historic districts have regulated this condition, we also propose that food must be served in such activated, commercial, open-air rooftop additions, not just alcohol, and no rooftop space can be occupied after 10:00 pm. Noise must not exceed prescribed decibel levels, reading to be taken at 5' above deck. No amplified music nor speakers shall be allowed.
- For properties located adjacent to residential areas, approved screens, walls, shutters, or other devices shall be required to restrict visual access to the residential units.
- Illumination of the activated, open-air rooftop addition shall be restricted to avoid lights that focus outward or upward and should limit spillage of light from the deck.
- Guidelines should explicitly indicate that rooftop decks that are highly visible are strongly discouraged. Such additions to historic buildings shall be located to the rear of the structure or the most inconspicuous side of the building. Additions to roofs shall not be visible from the front elevation.
- To be added to VCC Design Guidelines 14:17 Design Standards for Rooftop Addition Review:
 - Activated, open-air rooftop additions shall comply with all Rooftop Addition requirements and recommendations shown on VCC Design Guidelines.
 - No activated, open-air rooftop addition shall be allowed such that accessory structures (stair, elevator, etc.) would exceed the max. height allowable as per the CZO.



III. Rooftop Addition Guidelines Revision Improvement/Why It Matters

- These guidelines will assist developers when determining which buildings could appropriately be considered for this type of addition. The goal is to establish transparent and predictable standards and processes to ensure quality design in proposals. This was presented as a draft resolution and ratified by the Vieux Carré Commission at its July 5, 2018 hearing. It has subsequently been forwarded to City Council for formal adoption. This will then be added to the VCC design guidelines.



IV. Pre-Hearing Code Enforcement Conferences

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Scope

- Code Enforcement is successfully implementing pre-hearing conferences to help homeowners avoid costly fines and fees via the administrative hearing process. These conferences are available to all properties with no past code enforcement cases. They provide owners with information about the violations that have been observed at their property, seek to develop a concrete plan and timeline for addressing the violations, and link owners to resources should that be required.



IV. Pre-Hearing Code Enforcement Conferences Improvement/Why It Matters

- The conferences precede any enforcement actions, and will afford the owner time that they need to address any specific situations.



V. NOPD -- Code Enforcement Quality of Life Collaboration

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Scope

- Code Enforcement is successfully piloting a program to embed code enforcement inspectors within NOPD districts to help focus on and respond to quality of life issues. The approach, which is currently being tested in the 5th and 7th Districts, places code inspectors within precincts to link resources and community expectations to citizens, while also focusing code enforcement actions on areas that are a priority for both the community and NOPD.



V. NOPD -- Code Enforcement Quality of Life Collaboration

Improvement/Why It Matters

- Both NOPD and Code Enforcement continue to collect information and learn useful lessons that will be critical if a city-wide effort were realized.



VI. Honorary Street Name Dedications

VI. Honorary Street Name Dedications

Status Quo

- Officially renaming streets was the city's only legal mechanism for honoring people, organizations, and events that made a demonstrable and significant positive impact on the community; contributed to the cultural, economic, educational, intellectual, political, or scientific vitality of the community; or made an extraordinary contribution in the service of humanity. This created costs to be borne by the city in sign replacement and installation, and presented a public safety threat for emergency responses – especially in areas where only the official name of a few blocks was changed.



VI. Honorary Street Name Dedications

Scope

- Councilmember Cantrell passed legislation in 2017 to create a program for honorary designation of street names via dedication which transferred sign manufacture, install, and maintenance costs to applicants and allowed the official street name to still be posted alongside the honorary designation, thereby reducing emergency response risks. The scope of this project was to develop a PDF and online application, configure a process in the city's permitting software, train staff, and publish information relative to this program.



VI. Honorary Street Name Dedications

Improvement/Why It Matters

- Continual changes of official street names create challenges in identifying locations in the event of an emergency. Additionally, in the past the city did not budget for unanticipated desires to honorifically rename streets. Now the cost is borne by the applicant in a flexible, scalable manner such that applications can be for a single block or many, depending upon the applicant's budget and the particular local relevance.



VII. Streetlight Banners

VII. Streetlight Banners

Status Quo

- Many major thoroughfares in New Orleans feature banner brackets on street light poles. Previously, these banners were regulated loosely by the Department of Public Works with untracked sign-off in person, and it was difficult to reconcile collections. This resulted in some inappropriate commercial advertisements being placed on the city's property.



VII. Streetlight Banners

Scope

- In order to appropriately regulate content without impeding on freedom of speech, One Stop partnered with the Department of Safety and Permits and the Department of Public Works to promulgate rules. These standards create a legal basis by which to allow banners that promote local civic and community events, occasions, and special events in the city that have a direct and substantial civic or community benefit. The event or occasion should be of such a nature that its promotion, via appropriate messaging displayed on city property, will benefit the citizens of New Orleans. The scope of this project was to develop standards with SP, DPW, and the Law department; create a PDF and online application; configure a process in the city's permitting software; train staff; and publish information relative to this program.



VII. Streetlight Banners

Improvement/Why It Matters

- The use of city property for private commercial advertising creates visual pollution, and depending on the commercial nature of the advertising, can result in the city giving away a greater financial benefit than it receives. Offensive content could not be addressed under prior regulations. Now we are able to regulate the use of the right of way banners in a trackable, standardized, equitable manner and ensure the use is consistent with the city's interest in the property. The first banners installed under this program were applied for and paid for by John F. Kennedy High School Alumni Foundation to welcome cougars back to campus on 8/1/18.



VIII. Bike Facility Installations

VIII. Bike Facility Installations

Status Quo

- The Department of Public Works had no application of system in place to handle the installation of bike racks, corrals, or repair facilities in the right of way. The only information that was available to the public was information from a 2015 grant-funded program where people could request that bike racks be installed. This meant there were unofficial donations taking place where private groups were installing these bicycle-related facilities without official permission, and there was no centralized method of tracking them.



VIII. Bike Facility Installations

Scope

- The scope of this project was to create a process for private organizations to contribute to active transportation infrastructure without creating an undue burden, so that donations from groups like YLC and Bike Easy could be properly allowed and installed. The scope of this project was to develop standards and pricing with DPW and the Law department, create a PDF and online application, configure a process in the city's permitting software, train staff, and publish information relative to this program.



VIII. Bike Facility Installations

Improvement/Why It Matters

- There is now a permit that can be obtained, tracked, and geocoded for use in enterprise GIS systems. A nominal \$40 application fee authorizes these donations to be placed in the right of way with the approval of traffic engineering. Information about the program and its standard for sites is also available online.



IX. Development Working Group & One Stop Predevelopment Conferences

IX. Development Working Group & One Stop Predevelopment Conferences

Status Quo

- Many city, quasi-city, and state agencies are involved in the process of attracting development in New Orleans. Particularly, the Economic Development Office, NOLABA, NOBC, Resilience and Sustainability, Capital Projects, Cultural Economy, City Planning, Safety and Permits, HDLC, and VCC are a few examples. In the past, Economic Development has tried to coordinate with these agencies, but due to time constraints of city officials, sometimes only received partial answers based on partial understandings. Additionally, sometimes a lack of awareness around agency activities led to missed opportunities for creating synergy around a project or sets of improvements.



IX. Development Working Group & One Stop Predevelopment Conferences

Scope

- The scope of this project was to develop 2 forums with clear responsibilities and guidance to ensure the city maximizes opportunities for all of its citizens and busts through silos to have understandable and transparent processes.
- Forum 1: Development Working Group – the purpose is to review projects being proposed in New Orleans and identify nexuses of combined opportunity between its member organizations in a meeting that takes place once a month. This group evaluates each project to maximize local economic impact through employment opportunities, resilient infrastructure, and community benefit. This group involves 17 agencies that contribute to the development process. Members participate in the following ways:
 - Present projects for discussion before the working group based on pre-development meetings, NPP inquiries, review committees, applications, or other engagement.
 - Play an active role in the planning process by attending and participating in working group monthly meetings.
 - Represent and share community and industry member feedback during meetings by lending knowledge of community, non-profit and industry priorities and needs.
 - Lend subject-matter expertise to identify ambitious, cost effective, needed, and valuable priorities for the local community.
 - Propose any new best practices or technological advances that the administration should adopt or consider adopting.
 - Identify opportunities and recommendations that advance social and economic parameters including job creation, social justice impact, environmental gains, etc.
- Forum 2: One Stop Pre-Development Conferences are an opportunity for Economic Development to schedule developers for open, frank, exploratory conversations with mid-level department officials involved in the development process at the same meeting. These meetings are scheduled to introduce the developers to local development regulations and the officials responsible for most aspects of development. The meeting offers an applicant the opportunity to explore project viability, major requirements, fees, timeframes, and overall processing issues before filing an application, preparing detailed plans, and committing more time and resources. The goal of this early consultation is to help applicants understand and improve the flow and compliance of projects as they move through the city's review system. These meetings provide an opportunity for the developer to discuss their proposal with city officials for developments. These meetings are scheduled by having a 9am-12pm hold on all Friday mornings when there is no Development Working Group meeting. The staff who represent the city in these meetings:
 - Explain the city ordinances and processes pertinent to each project, and any rules and regulations adopted by the department being represented.
 - Provide applications, websites and other resources that the developer may wish to consider using while finalizing plans.
 - Identify projects that should be discussed at Development Working Group Meetings in order to maximize local economic impact through employment opportunities, resilient infrastructure, and community benefit.



IX. Development Working Group & One Stop Predevelopment Conferences

Improvement/Why It Matters

- There is now a systematic method of engagement for developers and the agencies working to promote the city. Economic Development and members of the Development Working Group are now able to freely offer meetings to developers without having to worry about catching the right person at the right time. There is also a standard set of questions to be used in gathering information from potential developers. The vision is that these will result in the communication of clear responsibilities and guidance to ensure the city maximizes opportunities for all of its citizens and busts through silos to have understandable and transparent processes.



X. EMD Motor Vehicle Inspection Training

X. EMD Motor Vehicle Inspection Training

Status Quo

- Until May of this year, the Equipment Maintenance Division of the CAO's office was untrained on performing brake tag inspections and affixing government break tags to windshields in regards to inspection standards. This created a problem for the Safety and Permits Motor Vehicle Inspection Bureau (MVIB) in being able to reliably track government brake tags or ascertain vehicle compliance.



X. EMD Motor Vehicle Inspection Training

Scope

- After two years of asking for access to EMD staff and location to train inspectors, permission was finally granted. MVIB trained 4 EMD to properly inspect city vehicles in the same fashion as other fleet station sites (like SWB, EPS, RTA, etc.). This training included in-person, on-site technical training in the city and state vehicle requirement standards. Additionally, the Alvar facility was inspected and documented to satisfy the requirements in the City Code for the Fleet Inspection Station.



X. EMD Motor Vehicle Inspection Training

Improvement/Why It Matters

- EMD is now compliant with City Code regulations related to brake tags, and a system for appropriately tracking serialized brake tags to vehicles has been established. As the fleet is re-inspected this year, we hope to see an improvement in the standards being enforced for city vehicles by EMD. We want to ensure that the public views all city vehicles as representing the same city that enforces brake tag regulations. We will not tolerate treating ourselves as an *exception* – we are an *example*.



XI. Safety & Permits/One-Stop Shop Additional Wins

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Permits Issued since 5/7/18

Permit Type	Commercial	Residential	Grand Total
New Construction	17	188	205
Substantial Improvement	69	200	269
Grand Total	86	388	474

Construction Value of Permits Issued since 5/7/18

substantial improvement	Commercial	Residential	Grand Total
New Construction	\$26,576,512.00	\$107,206,923.00	\$133,783,435.00
Substantial Improvement	\$46,246,883.00	\$21,898,431.00	\$68,145,314.00
Grand Total	\$72,823,395.00	\$129,105,354.00	\$201,928,749.00

Projects Completed (Certificate of Occupancy Issued) since 5/7/18

Row Labels	Commercial	Residential	Grand Total
New Construction	11	184	195
Substantial Improvement	30	153	183
Grand Total	41	337	378

Construction Value of Projects Completed (Certificate of Occupancy Issued) since 5/7/18

Row Labels	Commercial	Residential	Grand Total
New Construction	\$69,994,584.00	\$43,914,055.00	\$113,908,639.00
Substantial Improvement	\$19,839,439.00	\$17,956,002.00	\$37,795,441.00
Grand Total	\$89,834,023.00	\$61,870,057.00	\$151,704,080.00



Work in Progress

The table below shows construction projects that were in progress (actively building/repairing, regardless of when the permit was issued) during the Mayor's first 90 days in office.

Classification	Proposed Use Category	Proposed Use Industry	Number of Projects	\$ Value of Projects
Business	Retail	Retail	29	8,074,858.00
	Services	Non-Professional Services	8	1,645,111.00
		Pending Commercial Occupancy	11	1,216,420.00
		Professional Services	41	28,975,364.00
		Supportive Services	2	2,447,619.00
	Temporary	Temporary	61	813,029.00
Business Total			152	43,172,401.00
Education & Institutional	Institutional	Education	17	12,335,361.00
		Institutional	1	167,300.00
		Medical	4	14,545,318.00
		Non-Profit	1	200,000.00
		Recreation	3	16,079,155.00
		Religious	4	213,450.00
		Sports	1	447,706.00
Education & Institutional Total			31	43,988,290.00
Hospitality & Entertainment	Entertainment	Gaming	1	22,900.00
		Venue	3	1,996,485.00
	Hospitality	Accommodation	17	13,719,475.00
		Food/Beverage	50	4,740,463.00
Hospitality & Entertainment Total			71	20,479,323.00
Infrastructure & Industry	Industrial	Manufacturing	1	372,646.00
		Storage	3	1,507,562.00
	Infrastructure	Communications	25	478,000.00
		Government	6	1,962,941.00
Infrastructure & Industry Total			35	4,321,149.00
Residential	Residential	Accessory Structure	48	17,271,436.00
		Mixed Use	18	5,737,667.00
		Multi-Family	75	138,870,766.00
		Residential	126	28,540,284.00
		Single Family	863	66,156,179.00
		Two Family	207	13,702,283.00
Residential Total			1337	270,278,615.00
Grand Total			1626	382,239,778.00

